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Walla Walla District
Public Affairs Office

News Release

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Corps locks to close for maintenance March 8-22

Walla Walla, Wash., – Starting Saturday, the only boat traffic going up and down the Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers will be fish.

River traffic will stop from 6 a.m., March 8, until midnight, March 22, so Army engineers and their contractors can perform annual inspections, repairs and maintenance on the navigation locks at the eight dams between Portland, Ore., and Lewiston, Idaho.

In the Walla Walla District, this inland navigation outage will affect McNary Lock and Dam on the Columbia River, and Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite Locks and Dams on the Lower Snake River. Portland District's Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day Locks and Dams on the Columbia River will also close their navigation locks to conduct annual maintenance during the same period. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers coordinates the annual outage with inland shippers and cruise lines. Additional contract repair work on the lock gates will occur at Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental.

In preparation for the annual outage and additional repairs at Ice Harbor, Lake Wallula, the pool behind McNary Dam, was lowered one foot on March 3.

The pool was scheduled to be below 337 feet above mean sea level (MSL) on March 6 to allow work on the downstream navigation lock gate at Ice Harbor Dam. Lowering of the pool is now anticipated to occur a few days earlier than previously planned, due to increased power needs when the Columbia Generating Station was taken out of service this morning.

The pool at McNary could go as low as 335 MSL during the lock outage. Access to some marinas and grain ports in the McNary pool may be limited during this time. The levels on the lower Snake River below Ice Harbor Dam are also affected and are expected to be lower and will fluctuate.

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LOCKS/2-2-2

The locks and pool elevation will return to normal operation after the outage on March 22.

The elevation of the pool at McNary on Friday, Feb. 28, was 338.7 MSL. The operating range of the pool during this lock outage is between 335 to 340 feet. The pool normally operates between 337 to 340 feet.

The Walla Walla District's five navigation locks are used by commercial and recreational vessels. The locks are used to move vessels from one water elevation to another. Since April of 1975, an average of 1,500 vessels pass through the locks every year, about 70 percent of them are commercial barges carrying two million tons of grain, wood products, petroleum and other products up and down the Snake River.

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